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whoa," and continuing with such a variation of "whoas," "get-ups" and clucks that the poor horse would not know what to do.

One of the most amusing uses to which the magpie puts his powers is to call the chickens—"chick-chick-chick-chick" and when they have run eager and expectant in the direction from which the sounds come, which is naturally the cage, to seize one by the comb or the back of the neck and pull out a few feathers or spill a little blood. An old game hen used to respond to his calls, and as soon as she received a tweak on the head would ruffle up and begin a regular fight through the wire netting. At this time John Henry exhibited himself at his best. While flying at the hen he would keep saying "chick-chick-chick, come on, come on, Harry, Harry—get up—hello," in fact, he would go through almost his entire vocabulary while fighting and pulling out feathers.

He will sit by the hour on bright warm days and whistle and jabber, bringing in an intelligible word once in a while, but as a rule giving utterance to sounds, not native magpie language, yet still not capable of being translated into English. These sounds are similar to those uttered by very young children during their play in imitation of their elders. At times the bird's words are so opportunely chosen as to almost lead to a belief that they are spoken intelligently. I feel sure that this is the case when he calls "Harry" under certain conditions, such as when frightened or hungry, as my name pronounced in certain peculiar tones conveys these meanings.

Both of my magpies talk and whistle,

but it is John Henry who is most proficient; in fact the talking and whistling qualities in the female are not developed to any such extent as in the male, but my experience has been too limited to permit me to judge whether this peculiarity is due to the sexes or not. I understand, however, that male parrots talk better than females.

As to the question of "splitting the tongue" as commonly expressed, which consists merely in cutting the membrane beneath the tongue to allow that member more freedom in movement, I am of the opinion that this operation would not be productive of any material improvement in articulation. My birds can speak almost as clearly when holding a stick or food or any kind of solid in the bill as when it is empty, the movement producing the sound coming from the throat.

Mischievous by nature, they are always looking around for bright objects to play with. They will spend half a day with a tin spoon, a piece of glass or a key. All play-things not too large are buried in sand or grass or covered over with sticks and leaves or poked into nooks and crevices in the cage. I have never experienced any difficulty in providing suitable food. They take kindly to raw meat, fresh fruit and berries, boiled eggs, nuts and bread. They are also very fond of cheese, and any kind of insects which have moderately hard shells and are not soft or slimy to the touch. Considering the comparative lack of attention necessary for their proper care, and the highly interesting results obtained for the time and labor spent, a pair of pet magpies is a very desirable acquisition to the list of household pets.

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### Some Echoes from the Sierras.

BY C. BARLOW.

THE Lake Tahoe stage road was traversed by a goodly number of Cooper Club members during June 1902, indicating that this interesting

region still holds charms for the ornithologist. W. W. Price has his usual summer school at Glen Alpine, while John M. Willard of Oakland is looking

after the interests of an excursion of young naturalists at Susy Lake. Forrest Hanford has spent May and June working from Fyffe to the summit in company with L. E. Taylor, while Milton S. Ray and party passed through the region for a several weeks' outing at Lake Tahoe. Mrs. H. B. Wheelock, a popular eastern bird author, spent

The accompanying half-tone portrays Mr. Taylor about to scientifically investigate the nest of a white-headed woodpecker at about 4,800 feet altitude. The nest was ten feet up in a burnt stub and contained small young on June 15. While awaiting Mr. Taylor's arrival and watching the stub I saw one of the birds flying to the



PHOTO BY C. BARLOW.

TAYLOR OPENING A NEST OF WHITE-HEADED WOODPECKER.

some ten days in the region, gleaning observations for a forth-coming work.

The writer, joined by H. R. Taylor of *Nidologist* fame, likewise endured the many jolts of the mountain stage that they might wander through the high Sierran forests and observe the alpine species in their summer retreats.

It alighted below the hole, chuckled a few times, when the brooding bird appeared at the entrance and at once flew out. The newcomer then took its place, the exchange consuming but a moment.

At Echo (altitude 5700 feet) June 16 Mr. Taylor found a nest of the russet-

backed thrush (*Hylocichla ustulata*) containing four eggs, placed in a small, dense fir tree in a meadow. This apparently extends the vertical breeding range of this species, since the Big Tree hermit thrush appears at less than 1,000 feet above Echo. An interesting nest of the mountain bluebird (*Sialia arctica*) was also found by Mr. Taylor at Echo, built in a fence post beside the road and containing seven eggs.

A day was spent at Echo Lake (altitude 7600 feet) about the borders of which the unmelted snow of winter still lay, and a passing band of Clarke nutcrackers served to accentuate the impression that we were in the boreal zone. Journeying back to Echo two nests of the Big Tree thrush (*Hylocichla guttata sequoiensis*) were discovered. Mr. Taylor found one rather conspicuously located ten feet up in a young tamarack pine beside the road. It contained three eggs quite well incubated. A short distance farther I secured a nest with four eggs about one-third incubated, built only

two feet up in a small tamarack sapling. Both nests were built in trees directly next to the stage road, where the heat and summer's dust would seemingly prove undesirable to a bird of a thrush's tendencies. In both instances the birds had slipped from their nests before we found them. The nests were deeply cupped and substantially built. This was on June 17.

The Big Tree thrush apparently sings but infrequently during the heat of the day, but for a few hours preceding twilight it makes the mountain meadows resound with rare melody. On June 7 Mr. Hanford secured a Lincoln sparrow (*Melospiza lincolni*) on a meadow at 7,200 feet elevation, where it was probably about to breed. On June 19 near the summit a western goshawk (*Accipiter atricapillus striatulus*) flew across the stage road in front of us, disappearing into the timber. Mr. L. E. Taylor collected two sets of Calaveras warbler, one on May 27 at Fyffe and another on June 1 near Pacific.

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### Nesting of the Ruby-crowned Kinglet.

BY H. F. BAILEY, SANTA CRUZ, CAL.

**D**URING a season of "experience" and observation in Alaska I was fortunate enough to take the nest and eggs of the ruby-crowned kinglet (*Regulus calendula calendula*). The birds were abundant during the summer months in the neighborhood of Kenai, Cook's Inlet, where I was located, and bred in the dense spruce timber.

Although I spent much time looking I was never able to find but one nest. On May 15, 1901, while going through the woods I noticed a kinglet carrying material into the top of a tall spruce and I watched her. She was very busy. The nest was not visible on account of the thick foliage, but I noted the place, marked the tree, and blazed a trail to it. Two weeks later, May 28, I revisited

the spot but the birds were not about and I could flush nothing out of the tree. However, I could hear the male bird repeating his whistling song, very much in the style of the olive-sided flycatcher, from the top of the tallest tree in the vicinity. His note can be heard as far as the olive-sided flycatcher's and is all out of proportion to the size of the bird.

I decided to wait a while longer before investigating the nest. June 6 when I jarred the tree again the bird flew out. The mosquitoes were terribly numerous and hostile by this time, and I reluctantly removed my head covering, before ascending the tree, to prevent its getting torn on the short wiry branches. The nest was about thirty feet up where the branches did